

Henry Perry House  
45 Westway Road  
Southport  
Fairfield County  
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-305

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-305

## HENRY PERRY HOUSE

Location: 45 Westway Road, Southport, Fairfield County,  
Connecticut

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transvers  
Mercator Coordinates: 18.643840.4554600

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Elizabeth W. Robinson

Present Use: Residence

Statement of  
Significance: The Henry Perry house was erected in 1832, and is one  
of the two Greek Revival style structures in Southport  
which was designed with a five-columned front portico.  
The other, the Francis D. Perry House, 678 Pequot  
Avenue (Conn-317), was his brother's and was also  
erected in 1832. It is quite possible that they were  
designed or built by the same person. In keeping  
with high-style American architecture of the period,  
this wooden classical temple is a translation of the  
prototypical stone temple of Europe. Members of the  
Perry family were original land-owners of Southport in  
the 1600s, and the family name has remained prominent  
through the village's three-hundred year history.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1832.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Henry Perry's will of February 1847, recorded in Fairfield Probate Record, Volume I, states that the "homestead lot was purchased 19 November 1831 by Henry Perry from Joshua Jennings for \$550." The house was willed to his wife Henrietta for her life, and then to his brothers Charles and Francis D. Perry upon her death in 1892. Mrs. Francis D. Perry and Miss Maria D. Perry (daughter of Charles) sold the property to Elisha C. Sherwood in 1892. A court case was held in 1904, concerning title to the property. A dispute in the Sherwood family initiated the case, and it was dismissed in 1910. This

dispute accounts for the numerous quit claims and property transfers between 1900 and 1910. The following is the chain of title to the property commencing in 1892. Records cited are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

- 1892 Deed, June 28, 1892, recorded in Volume 66, page 264-66. Elisha C. Sherwood and Maria D. Perry to Elisha C. Sherwood, for consideration of \$6550.
- 1902 Deed, May 15, 1902, recorded in Volume 71, page 199. Elisha C. Sherwood to Oliver T. Sherwood.
- 1902 Deed, September 30, 1902, recorded in Volume 74, page 20. Elisha C. Sherwood to Francis P. Sherwood.
- 1902 Deed, May 21, 1902, recorded in Volume 71, page 200. Oliver T. Sherwood to Emily T. Sherwood.
- 1902 Deed, September 30, 1902, recorded in Volume 74, page 21. Francis P. Sherwood to Emily T. Sherwood.
- 1906 Deed, April 26, 1906, recorded in Volume 75, page 638. Elisha C. and Emily T. Sherwood to Margaret H. Peckham and Harold Longhran.
- 1910 Deed, November 29, 1910, recorded in Volume 78, page 162. Elisha C. Sherwood, Oliver T. Sherwood, Emma C. Sherwood, Edward A. Sherwood to Margaret H. S. Peckham and Harold S. Longhran, quit claim.
- 1910 Deed, November 29, 1910, recorded in Volume 78, page 164. Francis P. Sherwood to Peckham and Longhran, quit claim.
- 1910 Deed, December 5, 1910, recorded in Volume 78, page 437. Margaret H. S. Peckham and Harold S. Longhran to Joseph L. Hetzel.
- 1919 Deed, August 27, 1919, recorded in Volume 95, page 569. Joseph L. Hetzel to Mary Wells Hetzel (one-third interest), and Mary Wells Hetzel, guardian (two-thirds interest).
- 1925 Deed, July 1, 1925, recorded in Volume 118, page 239 and Volume 119, page 384. Mary Wells Hetzel, et al to Frederick B. and Florence Wells.
- 1961 Deed, October 19, 1961, recorded in Volume 429, page 58. Executrix of Estate of Florence Wells to Elizabeth W. Robinson.

3. Original plan and construction: The design of this two-and-a-half story frame structure was based on early nineteenth-century pattern book plans of high-style classical buildings. It is rectangular, measuring 30' (four-bay front) x 40', and has a gable roof with an east-west running ridge and gable pediment facing front. A semi-elliptical fanlight with a fluted keystone ornaments the front gable pediment. The front porticoed facade is covered with horizontal butt boarding; all other facades have clapboard siding. The two-story front portico is supported by five fluted Ionic columns and has a simple dentiled cornice with a double fascia board. Five Ionic pilasters on the front facade, defining the four bays, correspond in design and placement to the portico columns. The front door is flanked by side-lights and a leaded-glass transom. All front windows have a delicate classical cornice for lintels and are framed by louvred shutters.

The interior has a side-hall plan with a large front and rear parlor south of the stairhall. The main stairway to the second floor with turned newels and balusters has been rebuilt, dating from the twentieth century. Doorways are framed by molded jambs and carved corner blocks. The fireplace mantel in each of the first-floor parlors is supported by Roman Ionic columns and a molded cornice.

4. Alterations and additions: In 1892, after Henrietta Perry's death, the house was restored by its new owner, E. C. Sherwood. A two-story section with an ornate first-story Palladian window and a two-story bay window on the northeast corner was added to the north elevation. Contemporary newspaper accounts from the Southport "Chronicle" report of the needed repairs, and the contractor and architect chosen to complete the work.

June 28, 1892     ". . . at the Henrietta Perry place . . .  
As a building site, the location is very good; the house, however, is in such condition that extensive repairs will be needed to make it at all habitable, and a new structure would be preferable."

June 30, 1892     "E. C. Sherwood intends soon to begin the work of repairing and renovating the Perry place he bought Monday, and will make extensive alterations. The grounds will be cleared and laid out in lawns, the house altered somewhat in exterior appearance and interior arrangement. The framework is good; some of the floors will be re-laid and the chimneys taken down to the foundations and rebuilt. An addition of unconsidered age

will also be built, as the house in its present condition is not large enough for the owner's needs. As soon as the house is ready, Mr. Sherwood intends to move into it, and will offer his present residence for sale."

July 21, 1892 "Mr. Sherwood is consulting architects with regard to the changes to be made in the Perry place, and is already having the trees cut and grounds cleared."

September 29, 1892 "A. E. Dixon of Bridgeport has been awarded the contract for the alterations to be made on the Henrietta Perry property by E. C. Sherwood, and the work has already begun . . . The plans are from Architect Kent, of New York, and the alterations and additions, unless completed, will make the house one of the pleasantest in the village."

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fairfield County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,  
Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Fairfield County Probate Records, Probate Court,  
Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield, Connecticut.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Southport "Chronicle," June 28, 1892; June 30, 1892;  
July 21, 1892; September 29, 1892.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano  
Staff Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
December 1978

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.